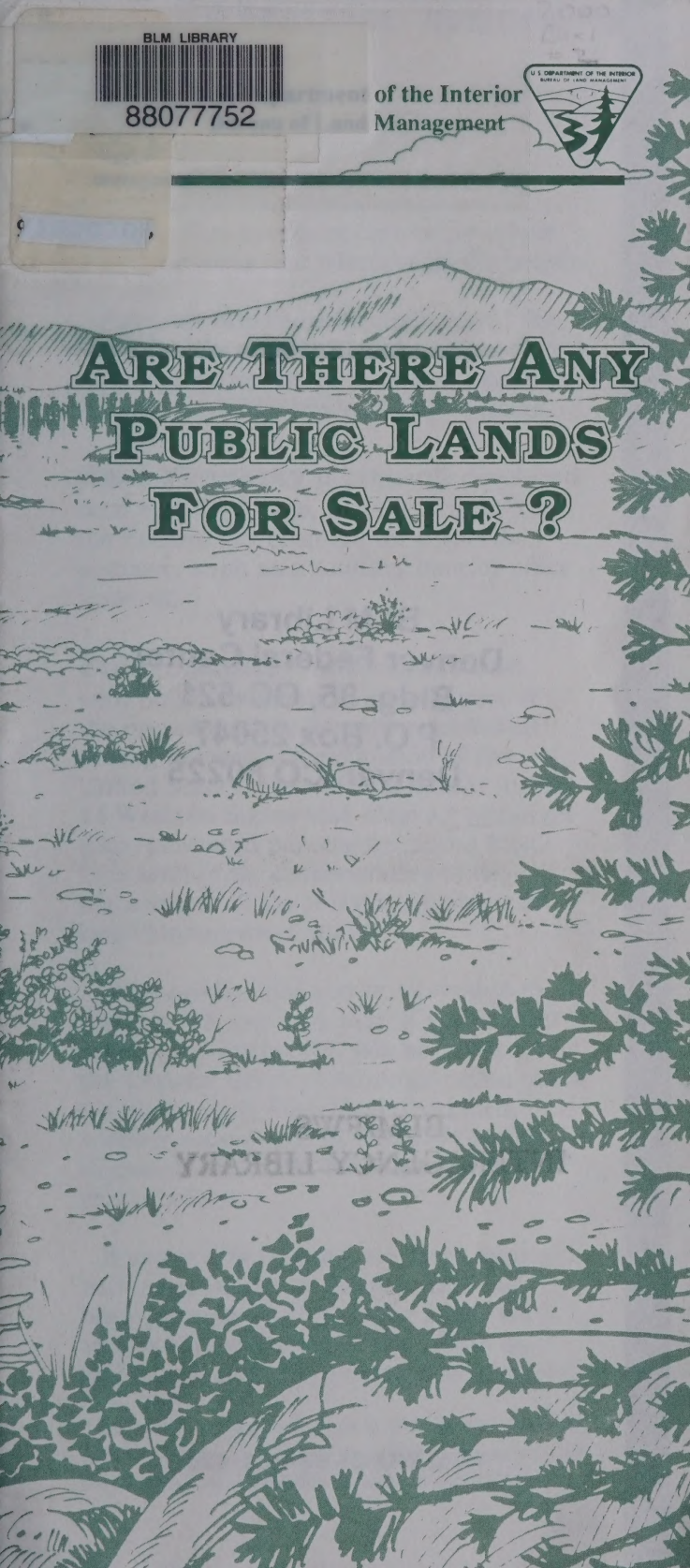
BLM LIBRARY
88077752

of the Interior
Management



ARE THERE ANY PUBLIC LANDS FOR SALE?

U.S. Bureau of Land
ARE THERE ANY
PUBLIC LANDS FOR
SALE?

BLM Library
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 85, OC-521
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, CO 80225

~~BLM/FWS~~
~~INTERAGENCY LIBRARY~~

BLM-WO-GI-93-001-4210

#27927560 ID:88077752 HD221.A67 1993

Does the Federal Government ever sell public land? The answer is yes. Lands identified as excess to the public's and Government's needs or more suited to private ownership are sometimes offered for sale. This brochure can help explain the procedures and where to go for details.

First, it's important to understand the Federal Government has two major categories of property which it makes available for sale: real property and public lands.

Real Property is primarily developed land with buildings, usually acquired by the Federal Government for a specific purpose, such as a military base or office building.

Public Land is undeveloped land with no improvements, usually part of the original public domain established during the western expansion of the United States. Most of this land is in the 11 Western States and Alaska,* although some scattered parcels are in the East. This land is the responsibility of the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

If it's public land you're interested in, read on. We can help you. If you're interested in real property, you should contact the General Services Administration (GSA); it's responsible for selling developed, surplus property. Addresses of the GSA Regional Offices are listed in the back of this brochure.

If you're still reading, we can assume you're interested in the possibility of buying public land from the BLM. We receive numerous questions about our land sales, and this brochure is designed

** Due to land entitlements to the State of Alaska and to Alaska Natives, no public land sales will be conducted in Alaska in the foreseeable future.*

to answer many of the questions most commonly asked. Later on, we'll also tell you where you can obtain more detailed information.

Q. Where are these public lands?

A. Almost all are in the Western States of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming.

There are also small amounts in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Washington, and Wisconsin.

There are no public lands managed by the BLM in Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Q. Is any of this land available free through homesteading?

A. No. Congress has repealed the Homestead Act.

Q. What lands are available?

A. Although homesteading is a thing of the past, the BLM does have lands suitable for purchase by private citizens. These are lands that have been identified as unneeded by the Federal Government or as better utilized in private ownership. By law, these lands are made available for sale at no less than fair market value.

Q. How are these lands selected for sale?

A. The law states that the BLM can select lands for sale if, through land use planning, they are found to meet one of three criteria: 1) they are scattered, isolated tracts, difficult or uneconomic to manage; 2) they were acquired for a specific purpose and are no longer needed for that purpose; or 3) disposal of the land will serve important public objectives, such as community expansion and economic development.

Q. What do the lands look like?

A. Land types vary widely. Some may be desert; some are rural. Some are small parcels of just a few acres; some are several hundred acres in size.

Q. Is any land suitable for farming?

A. Any lands with agricultural potential will be clearly identified in the sale notice. However, most public lands have little or no agricultural potential.

Q. On the average, what would public land cost per acre?

A. There is no "average" cost. Each parcel is evaluated separately through established appraisal procedures, based on the value of surrounding parcels. Fair market value is determined for each parcel. No parcel can be sold for less than fair market value.

Q. How is the land actually sold?

A. The BLM has three options for selling land: modified competitive bidding where some preferences to adjoining landowners are recognized, direct sale to one party

where circumstances warrant, and competitive bidding at public auction. The sale method is determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the circumstances of each particular parcel or sale.

Q. Are there any preferences for veterans?

A. No laws currently exist allowing the BLM to give veterans any preference for land purchases.

Q. Where can I find out about land that is going to be sold?

A. Your best source is the BLM office with jurisdiction over the area you're interested in. The BLM State Offices and their jurisdictions are noted in the back of this brochure. They can send you sale information. Sale information will also be published and broadcast in local news media.

Q. Where are land sales held?

A. They are held near the area to be sold, either at the local BLM office or in a suitable public location. Sales by the BLM are not held in Washington, D.C.

Q. Are there any restrictions on who can bid on these parcels?

A. Federal law states that the BLM can sell public land only to U.S. citizens or corporations subject to Federal or State laws.

Q. Must I appear in person to participate at the sale?

A. Your personal appearance is not required, but it is always to your

advantage to examine the parcel and know exactly what you are bidding on.

Sales can be conducted by oral bid, sealed bid, or a combination of both. However, even if only oral bidding is allowed, you can be represented by an agent.

Details on procedures for a particular sale are specified in the sale notice available from the BLM. The notice will specify type of sale, the percentage of the full price that must be deposited with each bid, and the time period allowed for full payment. The highest qualified bidder is eligible to buy the land; the deposits of unsuccessful bidders are returned.

Q. How is payment made? Is there financing available?

A. A certain minimum percentage of the full price is required with each bid. If you are the successful high bidder,the balance must be paid in full to the BLM within a set period of time before a deed or patent can be issued. Long-term financing must be arranged through private lenders.

Q. Once the BLM issues my deed, can I do anything I want with the land?

A. Yes, according to the terms of the deed and subject to State or local restrictions. The sale notice will clearly specify any Federal reservations or conditions of sale. These might include reserving mineral rights to the Federal Government, or allowing some currently authorized uses, such as grazing, to continue for a certain period of time, or reserving rights-of-way or easements for powerlines, pipelines, etc.

You are advised to review these conditions carefully so that you fully understand what your deed does and does not include.

Q. What about local taxes, zoning, etc.?

A. Once you receive title, the land is subject to all applicable State and local taxes, zoning ordinances, etc.

Q. Are water, power, and sewer service available on all parcels?

A. You should check with the city or county involved to see if such services are available.

Q. Are there roads or easements that guarantee I can get to the property?

A. The sale notice will explain legal access to the property or any access restrictions. You are advised to check out the parcel before you buy, including finding out if available access meets your needs.

Q. I'd like to find out what parcels the BLM currently has listed for sale. Where can I obtain that information?

A. The BLM State Offices listed on the following pages are your best source. They can tell you what sales are currently scheduled and what prospects are coming up. You can write, call, or visit them periodically for latest details.

If a sale is currently scheduled, information can be requested from the BLM describing the property and method of sale.

More detailed information, such as land reports, environmental assessments, etc., is also available upon request for a small copy fee.

U.S.DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOREST SERVICE

New legislative authority will be necessary to allow the sale of national forest system lands. If Congress authorizes the sale of national forest system lands, details can be obtained from the Forest Service, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090.

TAX DELINQUENCY SALES

Some local governments sell private land on which taxes have been delinquent to satisfy the tax debt. The Federal Government has no involvement in these sales. The best source for information is the local county tax assessor in the area involved.

STATE LAND PROGRAMS

State governments sometimes sell state-owned land. Information on these types of sales can be obtained through the State Lands Office in the State capital.

U.S.DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
STATE OFFICES

ALASKA:

222 W. 7th Ave., #13
Anchorage, AK 99513-7599
(907) 271-5555

ARIZONA:

3707 North 7th Street
P.O. Box 16563
Phoenix, AZ 85011
(602) 640-5547

CALIFORNIA:

2800 Cottage Way, E-2841
Sacramento, CA 95825-1889
(916) 978-4754

COLORADO:

2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, CO 80215-7076
(303) 239-3705

STATES EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, plus ARKANSAS, IOWA, LOUISIANA, MINNESOTA, and MISSOURI:

Eastern States Office
7450 Boston Boulevard
Springfield, Virginia 22153
(703) 440-1600

IDAHO:

3380 Americana Terrace
Boise, ID 83706
(208) 384-3000

STATE OFFICES

MONTANA, NORTH DAKOTA, and SOUTH DAKOTA:

222 N. 32nd Street
P.O. Box 36800
Billings, MT 59107
(406) 255-2940

NEVADA:

850 Harvard Way
P.O. Box 12000
Reno, NV 89520-0006
(702) 785-6501

NEW MEXICO, KANSAS, OKLAHOMA, and TEXAS:

1474 Rodeo Road
P.O. Box 27115
Santa Fe, NM 87502-0115
(505) 438-7450

OREGON and WASHINGTON:

1300 N.E. 44th Ave.
P.O. Box 2965
Portland, OR 97208-2965
(503) 280-7158

UTAH:

CFS Financial Center - 301
324 South State Street
P.O. Box 45155
Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0155
(801) 539-4100

WYOMING and NEBRASKA:

2515 Warren Avenue
P.O. Box 1828
Cheyenne, WY 82003
(307) 775-6117

OTHER LAND DISPOSALS BY FEDERAL AGENCIES GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

REGION 1

CONNECTICUT, ILLINOIS, INDIANA, MAINE, MASSACHUSETTS, MICHIGAN, MINNESOTA, NEW HAMPSHIRE, NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK, OHIO, PUERTO RICO, RHODE ISLAND, VERMONT, VIRGIN ISLANDS, WISCONSIN

10 Causeway Street, Room 1079
Boston, MA 02222
(617) 565-5700

REGION 4

ALABAMA, DELAWARE, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, FLORIDA, GEORGIA, KENTUCKY, MARYLAND, MISSISSIPPI, NORTH CAROLINA, PENNSYLVANIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, TENNESSEE, VIRGINIA, WEST VIRGINIA

401 West Peachtree Street
Atlanta, GA 30365
(404) 331-5133

REGION 7

ARKANSAS, COLORADO, IOWA, KANSAS, LOUISIANA, MISSOURI, MONTANA, NEBRASKA, NEW MEXICO, NORTH DAKOTA, OKLAHOMA, SOUTH DAKOTA, TEXAS, UTAH, WYOMING

819 Taylor Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102
(817) 334-2331

REGION 9

ALASKA, AMERICAN SAMOA, ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA, GUAM, HAWAII, IDAHO, NEVADA, OREGON, THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, WASHINGTON

525 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 744-5940

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

This publication is distributed as a public service by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management. Specific information on the subject is available from any Bureau of Land Management office. Your inquiries, comments, and suggestions are welcome.

January 1993

BLM Library
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 85, OC-521
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, CO 80225

☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1992—774-861